



# Kennel Cough

## Overview

- Kennel cough is an airway infection that causes a nasty cough in dogs. More severe cases can occasionally result in symptoms such as a high temperature or a reduced appetite.
- Call your vet for advice if you think your dog has kennel cough. Most dogs improve on their own, but some need treatment from a vet.
- Dogs with kennel cough should be kept away from other dogs and public spaces (while they are showing symptoms and for two to three weeks afterwards), as this is where spread is most common.
- The best way to prevent kennel cough is to vaccinate against it, especially if your dog mixes with lots of other dogs or spends time in kennels.

## What is kennel cough?

Kennel cough is an airway infection that causes a dry hacking cough in dogs. Similar to human colds, kennel cough can be caused by a number of different germs (viruses and bacteria). It's most common in areas where lots of different dogs gather (such as kennels, dog shows and doggy day care) and can survive in the environment for several weeks. Kennel cough spreads by direct contact between dogs, in the air and on surfaces (such as food bowls and leads). Dogs with kennel cough should be kept away from other dogs and public spaces while they are coughing, and for two to three weeks afterwards. [Coughing](#) is the most common symptom of kennel cough, but in more severe cases, it can cause symptoms such as a high temperature or a reduced appetite.

## Symptoms

Symptoms of kennel cough usually take 3-14 days to develop and then last for 1-3 weeks. Most dogs develop a [hacking cough](#) and stay otherwise quite well,



but puppies, older dogs, and poorly dogs can develop more serious symptoms such as:

- [A reduced appetite](#)
- [Low energy \(lethargy\)](#)
- A high temperature (fever)

## When to contact your vet

There are many different conditions that can cause [coughing](#) so it's a good idea to have your dog checked by your vet if they have a severe cough or have been coughing for more than a few days. When visiting your vet, make them aware that your dog has been coughing and wait outside until you are called to prevent spreading kennel cough to other dogs in the waiting room.

### Am I eligible for PDSA veterinary treatment?

## Treatment

Most dogs with kennel cough can be treated at home without medication and recover within 1-3 weeks. However, if your dog has a severe cough or appears unwell your vet may recommend:

- [Anti-inflammatories](#) - to reduce airway inflammation and bring down a high temperature.
- [Antibiotics](#) - antibiotics are very rarely prescribed for kennel cough because most cases are caused by viruses (which don't respond to antibiotics), but if your dog is very young, old or otherwise unwell, your vet may prescribe them as a precaution.

## Caring for a dog with kennel cough

- **Rest and TLC** - exercise can make a cough much worse; keep your dog warm, comfortable and allow them to rest as much as they need.
- **A steamy room** - some dogs with kennel cough can benefit from sitting in a steamy room (perhaps while you have a shower/bath). Never leave your dog alone in a steamy room or force them to stay in it if they aren't relaxed.





## Can humans catch kennel cough?

It's extremely rare for humans or cats to catch kennel cough. If you are concerned for yourself or someone you know, it is best to contact your doctor, or the [NHS for advice](#).

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